

A

New TRANSLATION

WITH A

PARAPHRASE

Of some Parts of

ECCLESIASTES

CHAP. II.

THIS Chapter is a profess'd enquiry, whether the true good and happiness of mankind in this world consists in their enjoyment of those pleasures which they can help themselves to. And we shall not elsewhere find the question decided so fully, and so satisfactorily. No other person ever made the experiments, necessary to be tried for the determination of it, so thoroughly as did this preacher. Nor did ever any one more maturely digest the considerations on which reason must determine it. The result of these experiments and considerations the reader will meet with in the last verse.

Verse 1 **I** Said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, and thou shalt enjoy pleasure; but behold! this also [prov'd] vanity.

1. *I resolv'd with myself to try what happiness cou'd be gain'd by an indulgence of my appetites in those enjoyments which are called pleasures. And on trial I found that they also are vanity.*

2. I said of laughter it makes me mad; and of mirth what does it [for me]?

2. *After*

2. After a fit of laughter, I could not forbear thinking I had been in a fit of madness, and after a scene of mirth I ask'd myself with a sigh—what am I the better for it?

3. I determin'd to continue my searches by an indulgence of my appetite in wine, (yet conducting myself with wisdom) and by making experiments of folly, till I shou'd discover wherein consists that good [provided] for the children of men, which they should pursue under the heav'n all the days of their life.

3. I determin'd however to continue my indulgence this way, drinking wine freely (yet not to deprive my reason of the government it shou'd always maintain over the man) and enjoying every foolish pleasure, till I shou'd satisfy myself what ought to be counted the good and happiness of human life, so far as to deserve to be the object of our care and pursuit, as long as we live in this world.

4. I made me great works, I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards.

5. I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all [kinds of] fruit.

6. I made me pools of water, to water therewith the forest in which my trees were growing.

4. 5. 6. In order to which I made me great works, building houses, planting vineyards, gardens and fruiteries, well stock'd with fruits of every kind.

I made me also * reservoirs of water, from which water was conducted to every part of the forest, which I had planted with my trees.

7. I bought me men servants and women servants, and I had a son to continue my family: also I had possessions of great, and small cattle, above all that were in Jerusalem before me.

7. I had a great number of servants; and to complete my happiness in the prospect of my family, I had a son in whom I might trust it would be continued. I had also a stock of cattle, and such kinds of wealth, much larger than any of my predecessors in Jerusalem.

8. I gather'd me also silver and gold, and [drew into my own possession] the precious rarities, which had been collected in the kingdoms, and provinces [of my neigh-

* The reader may see a very satisfactory account of these reservoirs in the Bp of London's notes on Isaiah I. 30,

neighbourhood:] I gat me men-fingers, and women-fingers, and those delights of the sons of men which [so] frequently draw 'em on to ruin, and destruction:

8. *I also amassed great quantities of silver and gold; found means to get into my possession, and place in my own cabinets whatever I heard of rare and precious in the treasuries of the kings and provinces of my neighbourhood. I gat me also men and women fingers, and the instruments of all those delights which mankind is so fond of, and too often pursue to their utter ruin.*

9. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me.

9. *So I grew much greater than any had been in Jerusalem before me: and the goodness of God continued me in possession of my wisdom; which was not taken from me in my time of luxury and dissipation, as Sampson's strength was from him, but was continued to me, that I might be capable of forming the better judgment of the pleasures I had tried, and be the better able to recover myself from the power of them, when God's grace should shew me the folly and mischief of them.*

10. And whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy; but my heart had joy of all my labour. And thus I had the return to be expected from all my labour.

10. *In the meantime I gave an entire loose to the reins of my appetite and fancy, and denied myself no pleasure I had any inclination to enjoy: and my heart seem'd so satisfied, that I thought I had found what I was seeking for, and was possess'd of the proper return for all my labour.*

11. Then I consider'd all the works which my hands had wrought, and all the labour which I had labour'd to do, and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit [of those labours] under the sun.

11. *But when I review'd it all dispassionately, according to the sober dictates of cool reason, I saw clearly that 'twas all Vanity, and that no true happiness cou'd be reap'd from those sublunary Enjoyments.*

12. Then I turn'd myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: that the man who shall come after thee shall demolish every thing which hath been done.

12. *Then I turn'd my reflections again on wisdom, and madness, and folly; and took also into my consideration the probability there was that my successor shou'd undo every thing I had done, and demolish all my works.*

13. But I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darknes.

13. *And I found reason to conclude that wisdom excelleth folly, as much as light excelleth darknes.*

14. [For] the wise man hath eyes in his head ; but the fool walketh in darknes. But I also observ'd that one event happeneth to them all.

14. *For the wise man is capable of judging both what he ought to do, and what will be the consequence of any thing he does, as a man who hath eyes can choose the road which will carry him to the place he would go to, and avoid that which would lead him wrong. But I observ'd also that both wise men, and fools are alike subject to the common accidents of life, and to the strokes, as they are call'd, of fortune.*

15. Then said I in my heart ; as it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me ; and why was I then more wise ? then I said in my heart that this is also vanity.

16. For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool : in time to come, that which the days now passing bring with 'em shall all be forgotten ; and certainly the wise man dieth as the fool.

15, & 16. *Then said I, if I have not in these respects any advantage of the fool, what am I the better for being wise ? In the common course of life I see nothing more favourable to the wise man, than to the fool : In their deaths I can perceive no difference worth taking notice of ; and after death they are both alike, with their actions, buried in oblivion. This very wisdom therefore is also vanity.*

17. Therefore I hated life, because the work which is wrought under the sun appear'd evil unto me ; for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

17. *The thought of life therefore grew irksome to me. For I saw evil attending every work that is done under the sun, and that all was vanity, and vexation of spirit.*

18. Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun ; because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.

18. *And even the view of my own works gave me pain, because I should leave them to the will and disposal of the man that should succeed me.*

19. And

19. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. Surely this also is vanity.

19. *And how do I know that he will not be a fool? yet shall all my works, contriv'd and executed with so much wisdom, be at his disposal to be alter'd, or destroy'd according to his [perhaps] unreasonable, or injudicious fancy. This therefore is also vanity.*

20. Then I gave up my heart to despair, with regard to all the works which I had wrought under the sun.

21. For when a man who hath labour'd both in wisdom, and knowledge, and equity, shall leave his portion to a man who hath not labour'd in those ways, surely this is vanity and a great evil.

20 & 21. *A despair therefore of finding satisfaction in any thing I could do here then seiz'd me. For what can be more discouraging, what more provoking than to think of leaving works, on which so much thought, care, and wisdom, have been bestow'd, to the humour of a man who has never consulted wisdom or reason in any thing, that he has done?*

22. For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart wherein he hath laboured under the sun?

23. For all his days are sorrow and vexation occasioned by his labour. Yea his heart taketh not rest in the night. Surely this is vanity.

22 & 23. *What does a man gain then by all his labours, and all the vexation wherewith those labours have been attended? And yet perhaps he has spent nights on them as well as days: contriving, and planning his schemes, when other men are taking their rest, and attending the execution of them with a solitude, and toil not less than that of the men who are working on them. Surely then this is vanity.*

24. Man cannot then, be made happy by eating and drinking and taking pleasure in his labour. And I saw plainly that this [disappointment of his expectations] is from the will of God.

24. *And the happiness of man cannot be found in eating and drinking, and enjoying pleasure. And it appears plain and clear to me that it is the will of God, that it should not.*

25. For

19. And

25. For who can eat, or make a greater display of grandeur, than I did?

26. But God giveth to a man that is good in his sight, wisdom and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travel, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

25. & 26. For who can enjoy the pleasures of the table, or know more of the satisfaction to be gain'd by works of magnificence than I have done? Whence then must arise the happiness of man in this sublunary world? Answer From the blessing of God. Who giveth to such as are careful to please him, by living according to his laws, wisdom, and knowledge to judge rightly of the world, and what befalls them in it, and a cheerfulness of spirit to relish and enjoy whatever he dispenses to them. But to such as will not please and obey him he giveth care and trouble: an incessant desire to gather and heap up, without any power of enjoying them, treasures which he in the course of his providence will dispose of to his own servants. And this surely must be vanity and vexation of spirit.

ECCLESIASTES

C H A P. VII. *Verse, 23.*

Verse 23. **A**LL this have I prov'd: I said, I would make proof of it wisely without forsaking my wisdom; but this was out of my power.

23. All this have I prov'd. I said indeed that I would make the proof of these things, in such a manner as shou'd become a wise man without suffering myself to be drawn into any thing contrary to what wisdom wou'd allow of. But I found it impossible. Wisdom cannot be maintain'd amidst such indulgences.

24. The working of God [is] deep and far [from us:] who by searching can find [it] out?

24. The Counsels and Operations of God's providence are too high and wonderful for us to comprehend; after the most diligent researches into them which our reason is capable of making, they will always appear to us mysterious and unaccountable.

25. I return'd and [applied] my heart to know and discover, both by search of wisdom, and the trial of sensible experience, even to know the folly of wickedness, and the madness of such as do not govern themselves by reason.

25. I determin'd however to renew and continue my search into these matters with a view of discovering, (if 'twere possible to discover, either by the exercise of reason, or the trial of experiment, what can induce the foolish man who denies the being of a God to be guilty of that impiety: and what can be the cause of that sottish, senseless behaviour, which men are sometimes guilty of, in defiance of every thing that common sense and right reason can suggest to turn them from it?)

26. And I find more bitter than death, the woman whose heart is snares and nets [and] her hands [as] bands: whoso pleaseth God, shall escape her, but the sinner shall be taken by her.

26. And the chief result of my enquiry is, that the influence of women much contributes to the producing these effects; the deceitful wicked part of the sex, ruining and destroying more men than all the other mischiefs and plagues which the world suffers by; their minds abounding in such wiles and stratagems as can hardly fail of ensnaring those that

that converse with them; and their hands like the strongest bands retaining and confining the wretches, who have been drawn within the compass of their reach. Nor can any one, who does not live so as to please God, and obtain the grace of his protection, hope to escape their attempts: The man who despises God and disobeys his laws, is a sure prey to them.

27. Behold, this have I found (saith the Preacher) proving one thing after another by experience.

28. With regard to the thing which my soul is yet in search of, but I have not found; a man thoroughly accomplish'd I have found, but a woman in her perfection I have not found.

27. & 28. This however my experience warrants me to say that, I have in the course of my searches met with a man furnish'd with all the virtues and good qualities which can be expected in human nature: but I have never met with a woman possess'd of the qualities necessary to form and complete an accomplish'd woman's character. *

29 Behold

* It cannot be improper to observe here how little reason the gay and libertine part of the world have to expect, that the women they are apt to connect themselves with, should be of the most valuable sort; or to complain of the sex in general, when their favourite proves a trisler or deceitfull.

Solomon may be suppos'd to have had as much sense, and to have been as capable of making a judicious choice as any of them are. Yet so unfortunate was he in his connections, that among the many he acquainted himself with, he did not meet with one, who answer'd the idea he had conceiv'd of a thoroughly accomplish'd woman. We are not however from hence to conclude, that no such was to be found. For he himself tells us there was. Prov. 31.

The conclusion therefore to be drawn from the account he gives of his disappointment, is, that he consult'd his fancy more than his reason in his choice of them;--that he prefer'd those whom he thought likely to gratify his sensual enjoyment, to such as seem'd more dispos'd to live in a way of duty to God;--and that consequently his choice was made from the most unworthy part of the sex. Prov. 31. 30. It may too with reason be suppos'd that God punish'd him with the disappointment and vexation of spirit he complains of, in resentment of the undue preference he had been guilty of.

29. Behold this only have I found; that God made man upright; but they have been led to oppose his will by following the dictates of their sensual appetites.

29. Upon the whole, the conclusion to which my searches have at last brought me is merely this. That God gave to man at his creation such a rectitude of nature as would have maintain'd him in a course of uninterrupted happiness, had he constantly consulted and obey'd the dictates of his reason: but giving into the indulgence of his sensual appetite, he found himself enslav'd to lusts, incompatible with obedience to the commands of God, and has been thereby led to dispute the reasonableness of his laws, and to question, or even deny his existence.



C H A P. XI. *Verse, 7.*

Verse 7. **T**RULY the light [is] sweet, and a pleasant [thing it is] for the eyes to behold the sun.

7. The enjoyment of life is no doubt very agreeable.

8. Wherefore, if a man live many years, let him rejoice in them all; but let him remember that, since the days of darkness will be many, all that offereth itself to him is vanity.

8. But however uninterrupted the course of a man's prosperity may be, 'twill be his wisdom to think of the days of darkness, which will surely come on him, and that therefore all that now offers itself to him, with such a specious appearance of happiness, is indeed but vanity.

9. Rejoice, O brave man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy bravery; and walk in the ways of thy heart, and according to the sight of thine eyes; but know that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

9. Rejoice then, O man of bravery, in thy youth, and spend these thy days of bravery in pleasure, according as thy inclination, or fancy shall lead thee; but remember, withall that God will call thee to an account for the manner in which thou spendest these years of jollity.

B

10. Therefore

10. Therefore keep thy mind clear of perverseness, and thy body of impurity, when youth, and the early part of life is vanity.

10. Therefore keep thy mind free from all disrespectful sentiments of God, and his providence, and thy body clean from all impure practices in this thy early part of life, which, as I have said, is vanity.

CHAP. XII. **A**ND remember thy Creator in the Verse 1. days of thy bravery, before the evil days come on, and the years draw nigh of which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

1. And remember thy Creator in this the prime part of thy life, before the uncomfortable time of old age comes upon thee, in which there is no pleasure.

2. Before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars lose their lustre, and the morning even after rain does not appear lovely.

2. Before the world and its enjoyments lose the charms they now have for thee; before the time comes, when the sun, the moon, and the stars shall shine without that lustre, which now seems so pleasant to thee, and even the clear shining of a morning after rain, seems to have no beauty in it. See 2 Sam. 23. 4.

3. In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders shall leave their work undone, because their number is lessen'd, and those that look out of the windows be darkened.

3. When the hands which have so long guarded the fabrick of the man tremble, and the legs which have supported it totter, and the teeth can no longer grind its meat, and the eyes, which should direct its motions, and give it notice of approaching danger, become dark and unable to perform that office.

4. When the gates of discourse shall be kept shut because the voice is low and destitute of grace, and sounds like the voice of a little bird, and all relish for musick shall be lost.

4. When the old man shall have little pleasure in conversation, the voice being low, and disagreeable, more like the whistling of a bird, than

than the voice of a man, and he can hear no longer the musick of singing men and singing women. 2 Sam. 19. 35.

5. Then hills in his way shall frighten, and waters terrify him, and he shall grow negligent of business, and feasting shall be troublesome to him, and the love of quiet shall grow upon him, as the man draws towards his long home, and his friends come about him in the street with condolence.

5. If he goes abroad, every rising ground seems a hill to him, and frightens him, and every water terrifies him, as if it were a sea. He grows indifferent and careless with regard to business, and the hurry even of a feast is too much for him. The quiet temper of a dove who loves to be at rest, grows on him; and he is sensible he is every day drawing on fast towards his long home; or if he would not be otherwise sensible of it, the officious condolence of the friends who come about him in the streets would make him think of it.

6. Before the schemes of getting money be laid aside, and the pleasure of [possessing] gold be weaken'd, and instead of springing hope, he shall have [only] a prospect of dissolution, and the wheel be roll'd into the pit.

6. And now all his schemes for getting money are laid aside, and heaps of gold in his possession give him but little pleasure, and instead of the blooming hopes, which flatter'd his youthful days, he has nothing before him but the prospect of a speedy dissolution, and the wheel of life, which has been for a long time drawing near to the pit, now rolls into it.

7. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

7. And the body, which was at first made of the earth, returns to earth again, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

8. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.

8. And thus, as I said in the beginning of my discourse all is vanity.

9. In sum the preacher according to his wisdom, shall taught the people knowledge, and with [great] attention, and application, set in order many proverbs.

10. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words, at the same time that he wrote what was upright, even words of truth.

9 & 10. Thus did the preacher employ his wisdom in instructing his people.

people ; sparing no pains or attention in making a collection of useful lessons for the conduct of human life ; which he was also careful to deliver in the most winning terms : chusing the most agreeable, and pleasing expressions which were consistent with the truth and uprightness he profess'd.

11. The words of the wise are as goads, and as fences set down to keep in the flocks, which are order'd by a single shepherd.

11. And certainly such lessons are to men who will pay a proper regard to them, useful as goads to spur them on in the paths of honour and virtue. They are too fences which will keep 'em from transgressing the bounds within which their duty, and happiness would confine 'em, as those which a shepherd who has no assistant, sets down to keep his flock, when he has gather'd 'em together to examine them, from running at liberty before he has taken proper care of them.

12. In fine, by these, my son, be admonish'd : of making many books [there is] no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

13. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God, and keep his commandments ; for this the whole [duty and happiness] of man.

12 & 13. Be persuaded therefore, my son, to govern thyself by these lessons. Thou mayest get books without end, and weary thyself with incessant study. But after all, thou wilt find the sum and substance of all wisdom contain'd in this one sentence, " Fear God, and keep his commandments ; for this is the whole duty and happiness of man.

Should the reader think it strange that a description begun in figurative expressions, should be continued in plain language, through the greatest part of it, and at last be concluded with a figure, let him hear what the Bishop of London says on this point.

|| " Parable, says he, must all along be uniform, and

|| Est quasi lex quædam parabolæ, ut per omnia sibi constet, neque recessi is propria admixta habeat. In quo multum differt a prima Allegoriz

not mix plain language with figurative; in which it much differs from Allegory, which beginning in Metaphor frequently drops it, and goes on in plain language," of which he gives an instance in Psalm 88. 9--18. and says, § "Of the very many beauties to be found in this Allegory, 'tis not the least that he slides from plain language into Metaphor, and as naturally recovers himself out of Metaphorical expression into such as is void of figure." † "You see, says he, speaking farther of this passage, what a liberty is allowed to this sort of Allegory, of intermixing proper language with figurative; and how becoming such a practice is, since by this means a more agreeable light is thrown upon the subject, by an indirect, and not too plain an illustration." He afterwards says, ¶ "I have above shewn the liberty allowed to a continued Metaphor (another expression for what is called Allegory) of mixing plain language with figurative, &c."

The

goriæ speciei; quæ a simplici Metaphora paulatim progrediens non semper continuo excludit proprium. *Præl. 10. p. 125. Ed. 2d. 8vo.*

§ Inter plurimas autem elegantias, quibus abundat hæc Allegoria, non minimam habet gratiam ea verecundia, qua cum in ingressu tum in exitu utitur; a propriis in translata paulatim illapsa, nec minas leniter ex translatis in propria per gradus quosdam se recipiens. *ibid.*

† Videtis quantum in hac prima Allegoriæ specie immiscere liceat translatis propria, quantumque id quod licet, deceat; cum hoc modo facilior graviorque fit ab alteris ad altera deflexio, simulque oblique, nec nimis aperta explicatione, lux jucundius infertur. *ib. p. 127.*

¶ Exposui supra quæ Continuatae Metaphoræ concederetur licentia translatis propria, hoc est imaginem remotiorem cum proxima adscendens &c. *Præl. 11. p. 131.*

The Translator considers the Hebrew Text, as it appears in our printed Bibles, merely as a Translation: The original Text being the Letters without vowel points, without pauses, and even without any division into words. He therefore thinks himself at liberty, whenever the context requires it, either to read with different points, or to divide the letters differently into words, or sentences. He supposes himself too at liberty to read some sorts of words either with or without a *Kau*, with or without a *Yod*. For all readers have seen and allowed the necessity of doing this in many instances and therefore it may be necessary in others which they have not been aware of. He has too now and then taken the liberty of applying that common rule, *Literæ hominū genæ, siue unius organi facile inter se permutantur* : - where no application of it perhaps has been made before. And these are all the liberties he has presum'd to take, except he has in a single instance suppos'd a word should be read with an *Aleph epentheticum*, as is done in the present way of reading the Text in many places.

P. S. 'Twas intended to print only a few Copies of this Paper, to be given to the Translator's particular Friends. But on consideration, that the more it is dispersed, the better the sentiments of the Public in general concerning it must be known, the Translator has ordered a number to be printed and sold.

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